



# PRESS RELEASE

## Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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### **Former Secret Service Agent Sentenced 71 Months in Scheme Related to Silk Road Investigation**

A former Secret Service special agent who had been a member of the Baltimore Silk Road Task Force was sentenced to 71 months in prison today on charges of money laundering and obstruction of justice.

Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, Acting U.S. Attorney Brian Stretch of the Northern District of California, Chief Richard Weber of the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI), Special Agent in Charge David J. Johnson of FBI's San Francisco Division, Special Agent in Charge Michael P. Tompkins of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General's Washington, D.C., Field Office and Special Agent in Charge James E. Ward of the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General's Atlanta Field Office made the announcement.

U.S. District Judge Richard Seeborg of the Northern District of California sentenced Shaun W. Bridges, 33, of Laurel, Maryland, in San Francisco following his guilty plea to one count of money laundering and one count of obstructing justice. Judge Seeborg also ordered Bridges to forfeit \$651,000.

Between 2012 and 2014, Bridges was assigned to the Baltimore Silk Road Task Force, a multi-agency group investigating illegal activity on the Silk Road, a covert online marketplace for illicit goods, primarily drugs. Bridges's responsibilities included, among other things, conducting forensic computer investigations in an effort to locate, identify and prosecute targets, including Ross Ulbricht, aka Dread Pirate Roberts, who ran the Silk Road from the Northern District of California.

As part of his guilty plea, Bridges admitted to using account information that he obtained during the January 2013 search and arrest of Curtis Green, a customer support representative on Silk Road, to reset passwords and pins of various accounts on Silk Road and move approximately 20,000 bitcoin, at the time worth approximately \$350,000, from those accounts into a bitcoin "wallet" that Bridges controlled. When Ulbricht learned that Green's access to Silk Road had been used to transfer bitcoin from Silk Road into a wallet, Ulbricht cancelled Green's administrator access to Silk Road and attempted to have him killed in retaliation for the bitcoin thefts.

Bridges admitted that he moved the stolen bitcoin into an account at Mt. Gox, an online digital currency exchange based in Japan, and that between March and May 2015, he liquidated the bitcoin into \$820,000 in U.S. currency and had the funds transferred to a personal investment account in the United States. In June 2014, Bridges transferred money from the investment account into a personal bank account that he shared with another person.

Bridges also admitted that he used Green's access to Silk Road to steal bitcoin from the site, thereby limiting Green's access to further the Baltimore grand jury investigation of Ulbricht and Silk

Road. Additionally, Bridges admitted that he made multiple false and misleading statements to both prosecutors and investigators in connection with the San Francisco grand jury investigation into his own illegal acts.

Bridges is the second of two federal agents to be sentenced in connection with the Baltimore Silk Road Task Force's investigation into the Silk Road. Carl M. Force, 46, of Baltimore, was a special agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration who pleaded guilty on July 1, 2015, to a three-count information charging him with money laundering with predicates of wire fraud and theft of government property, obstruction of justice and extortion under color of official right, related to his theft and diversion of more than \$700,000 in digital currency to which he gained control as part of undercover role on the Baltimore Silk Road Task Force. On Oct. 19, 2015, Judge Seeborg sentenced Force to 78 months in prison.

The FBI's San Francisco Division, the IRS-CI San Francisco Division, the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General and the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General in Washington, D.C., are investigating the case. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kathryn Haun and William Frentzen of the Northern District of California and Trial Attorney Richard B. Evans of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section are prosecuting the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Arvon Perteet of the Northern District of California handled the asset forfeiture aspects of the case.

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